

ACE Employee Newsletter

For Amarillo City Employees

Volume 4, Issue 7 • July 2014



Quarter Century Club inducted several new members last month. For more information, see the article on Page 8. Pictured from left are: Kelly Nily, Street; Ignacio Rosas, Civilian Personnel; David Ponce, Police; Randy Lampkin, Utility Billing; Paul Hagler, Jr., Police; Morgan Powers, Police; Robert T. Gabel, Jr., Police; Robert Woodard, Police; Tony Robinson, Fire Operations; Samuel A. Garcia, Police; Joe Prater, Fire Operations; Ramona Noblitt, Municipal Court; and Judy Alexander, Traffic Engineering. **Not pictured:** Gregory Grant, Fire Operations; William Nolan, Fire Operations; Richard Ray, Police; Frank Wray, Fire Operations; and Jimmy Stevens, Police, Associate Quarter Century Club member.

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City Conducts Dependent Eligibility Audit

by Hector Mendoza, Benefits Administrator

We are all aware of how important it is to have adequate health care coverage. We also know paying for health care can be expensive. What you may not know is that the City of Amarillo is self-insured, which means all health claims and costs are paid by the City, not an outside insurance company.

As a self-funded plan, part of our job is to keep costs down so we can maintain a competitive health care plan for all our employees. We need to make sure that only those dependents who are actually eligible are the ones being provided with coverage. National averages show that each dependent's health care costs are \$3,000 each year. Covering dependents who are not eligible raises the cost for benefits which is reflected in the premiums deducted from our checks.

In an effort to control these costs, we have retained the services of a highly recommended independent auditor, HMS Employer Solutions, to assist us with completing a dependent verification audit. They are known for their professionalism, confidentiality and sensitivity to employee needs and concerns. We are confident this process will ensure that we are covering

eligible dependents in a fair and equitable manner.

If you have dependents enrolled in the City of Amarillo Group Health Plan, you will receive a letter addressed to your home from HMS Employer Solutions. The letter will detail the steps and information required to keep coverage on your enrolled dependents. You will also be asked to submit evidence of eligibility directly to HMS Employer Solutions.

When you receive correspondence from HMS Employer Solutions, please read it carefully as there are specific due dates when certain information needs to be returned. Failure to follow the instructions could result in loss of coverage for your dependents.

Detailed eligibility information, as well as a toll-free customer service number, fax number and customized web address will be included in the upcoming correspondence from HMS Employer Solutions. Feel free to contact them if you have any questions or need additional information.

Thank you for helping us manage our plan expenses so we can continue to provide health care at a reasonable cost! If you have any questions, please call the Health Plan Administration Department at 378-4235.

Library Offers Reading Help for Kids with “Puppy Tales”

by Stacy Clopton Yates, Public Relations Coordinator, Amarillo Public Library

Puppy Tales—an innovative new program offered at the Downtown Library gives kids who are working to improve their reading skills a chance to practice in a stress-free environment by reading aloud to dogs.

Library Youth Services Coordinator, Cindi Wynia, says that by reading to animals instead of people, readers can relax and build confidence. “Kids can sense how much adults want them to succeed, and that can actually make it harder for them to make progress with their reading. Dogs just like the attention and they don’t care how long it takes a child to sound out a word.”

Wynia also says that readers may have to work harder when reading to a dog—and that can make them stronger readers in the long run. “Parents sometimes want to help by jumping in and telling a child what the next word is. That can help a child learn *that* word, but it won’t help him or her learn how to sound out words or figure out a word in context.”

All of the *Puppy Tales* dogs are dogs who have completed obedience training and worked with humans as therapy dogs. Mary Powell, whose dogs, Dancer and



Jellybean, take part in *Puppy Tales*, says her dogs have lots of experience giving comfort to humans. “They’ve been to BSA Hospice and I take them to nursing homes too. They get out quite a bit.”

Wynia says libraries across the country have experimented with programs similar to *Puppy Tales* with very good results. “I loved the idea the minute I heard about it. Reading is the most important skill a child will acquire, because nearly every other skill builds from reading. So of course we want to try new ideas to help young readers.”

According to Wynia, the initial response to *Puppy Tales* has been very positive. “We’ve held two

open houses where people could come meet the dogs and ask questions about the program and several families have booked appointments to read to our *Puppy Tales* dogs.”

Families interested in being part of *Puppy Tales* are welcomed to contact Wynia at 378-3089 or by e-mail at Cindi.Wynia@amarillolibrary.org to make an appointment for a child to read to any one of several dogs taking part in the program.

Recipients of John Stiff and L. Ray Vahue Scholarships Announced

The City of Amarillo, in conjunction with the Amarillo Area Foundation, is pleased to formally announce the recipients of the 2014 John Stiff and L. Ray Vahue scholarships.

The John Stiff Scholarship, given in honor of the late city manager by that name, is awarded annually to a current City of Amarillo employee pursuing vocational training, technical training or a college degree related to municipal government. The recipient this year is Ana P. Castanon, an administrative assistant at the

Public Health department. She attends classes at Amarillo College.

The L. Ray Vahue Scholarship is offered in honor of the late L. Ray Vahue, who served as mayor of Amarillo in the early 1970s. It is awarded annually to a current City of Amarillo employee, or the spouse, child or grandchild of a City employee or City of Amarillo retiree, who is attending a technical school, vocational school, or college. The 2014 recipient is Sanjana Gangane. The scholarship will be applied

toward her studies at the University of Texas at Austin.

City Manager Jarrett Atkinson personally expressed his congratulations to each of the scholarship recipients in a letter. The City is both proud and honored to have such hard-working students representing Amarillo in their quests for higher education. If you are interested in applying for next year’s scholarships, please contact Lori James in Human Resources at 378-3090.

Police Academy Graduates 17 New Officers

The latest generation of Amarillo Police Department officers was welcomed into service Wednesday, June 11, at the Amarillo Police Department's 85th Police Academy graduation. The graduation ceremony, held in the Grand Plaza of the Amarillo Civic Center, saw the swearing-in of 17 new officers by City of Amarillo Municipal Court Judge Sonya Letson.

By the time of graduation, officers had completed more than 1,100 hours of training since beginning the Academy in December 2013. Recruits started their 27-week-long studies by passing the Texas Basic Peace Officer's Certification test. They then began more advanced, department-specific courses, which included training in areas such as emergency vehicle operation, report writing, department rules and regulations, criminal, juvenile, and traffic law, search and seizure, criminal investigation, evidence collection, mental health crisis intervention, mechanics of arrest, and self-defense. Graduating officers have been assigned to the Uniform Division and will continue their training under the direct supervision of Field Training Officers for the next four months, rotating through each shift and undergoing daily evaluation. The field training period is used to document training and knowledge of more than 900 police tasks.

A warm congratulations and best wishes for their future training goes out to the graduates of the 85th session of the Amarillo Police Department Academy. The 86th Amarillo Police Academy, with 12 recruits, began classes June 5.



photo by Jennifer Torres, APD

Top row, left to right: Craig Cothrin, Kraig Stockstill, Travis Moore, Matthew Brown, Matthew Biernacki, Zachary Matlock and Nicholas Burns; **Middle row:** Michael Maeker, Cameron Johnson, Amanda Williams, Johnny Hoggatt and Capt. James Burgess; **Front row:** Sgt. Mike Martinez, Steven Deal, Jacob Roybal, Micah Meurer, Chief Robert Taylor, Chase Dockins, Guy Capra and Zachary Lynn.

CORRECTION: In a photo last month about a Wreath Laying Ceremony, an officer was improperly recognized. The officer should have been identified as Susan Goodson. We apologize for this error.

From the Pantry ...

Prepared by Margaret Payton, MBA, RD



Portobello Sandwiches with Red Pepper Sauce

Hands on: 30 minutes

Total: 30 minutes

- 4 (4-inch) Portobello mushroom caps
- 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil, divided
- 2 garlic cloves, minced and divided
- 2 (½-inch thick) slices red onion
- ¼ teaspoon kosher salt, divided
- 8 (1.25 ounce) slices ciabatta bread
- ½ cup bottled roasted red bell peppers, rinsed and drained
- 1 tablespoon dry-roasted almonds, coarsely chopped
- 1 teaspoon red wine vinegar
- 2 ounces goat cheese, crumbled (about ½ cup)
- 1 cup fresh spinach
- 12 basil leaves

1. Preheat broiler to high.
2. Heat a grill pan over medium-high heat. Remove gills from mushrooms using a spoon; discard gills. Combine 1½ tablespoons oil and half of garlic; brush over mushrooms and onion slices. Place mushrooms and onion slices in pan, and cook 5 minutes on each side or until tender. Remove from heat. Sprinkle mushrooms with ¼ teaspoon salt. Separate onion slices into rings.
3. Place bread slices on a baking sheet, and broil 1 minute on each side or until toasted.
4. Place 1 ½ teaspoon oil, garlic, ¼ teaspoon salt, bell peppers, almonds, and vinegar in a food processor, and process until smooth. Spread red pepper sauce evenly over 1 slice of each bread slice; top 4 bread slices evenly with cheese, 1 mushroom, onion rings, spinach, and basil. Top with remaining 4 bread slices, sauce side down.

Serves 4 (serving size: 1 sandwich)

Calories 357, Fat 14.1g (sat 3.5g, mono 8.7g, poly 1.4g); Protein 12g; Car 48g; Fiber 3.6g; Chol 7 mg; Iron 3.5 mg; Sodium 734mg; Calc 49mg

Safety Corner: Safety Terms and Conditions

by Charlie Sanchez, Safety Director

Have you ever wondered what the definitions and acronyms used in the Safety Industry stand for? Let's look at some of the more common terms and ones you may not see or hear about as much as the other terms.

Safety: The control of recognized hazards to achieve an acceptable level of risk. This can take the form of being protected from the event or from the exposure to something that causes health or economical losses. It can include protection of people and possessions.

Incident: An event that could lead to loss of, or disruption to, an organization's operations, services or functions.

Accident: An unfortunate incident that happens unexpectedly and unintentionally, typically resulting in damage or injury. (Implies it is non-preventable).

Hazard: A situation that poses a level of threat to life, health, property or environment.

Engineering Controls: To the extent feasible, removing or reducing the hazard or source of exposure either by initial engineering design specifications or by applying methods of substitution, isolation or ventilation.

Administrative Controls: Using controls that alter the way the work is done, including timing of work, policies and other rules and work practices such as standards and operating procedures including training, housekeeping, equipment maintenance and personal hygiene practices.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE): Using equipment worn by employees to reduce exposure when engineering and/or administrative controls are not possible or when they are sufficient to achieve acceptable limits of exposure.

Direct Costs: Medical costs, property damage costs, indemnity payments, etc.

Indirect Costs: Productive time lost by an injured employee, productive time lost by employees and supervisors helping the accident victim, cleanup and startup of operations interrupted by an accident, time to hire or train a worker to replace the injured worker until they return to work, time to repair or replace damaged equipment, materials or other property, reduced morale among employees, and perhaps lower efficiency and time completing paperwork generated by the accident.

Job Safety Analysis (JSA): An important analyzing tool that works by finding hazards and eliminating, minimizing and controlling them before the job is performed, and before they have a chance to become injuries or damage.

Root Cause Analysis: A tool of continuous improvement that identifies the causes of faults or problems. When the causes are removed from the problem fault sequence, this prevents the final undesirable event from recurring.

Blood Borne Pathogens: Germs that can cause disease. The germs are carried by human blood and other body fluids. The three most common blood borne pathogens are Hepatitis B Virus (HBV), Hepatitis C Virus (HCV) and Human Immuno-Deficiency Virus (HIV).

Ergonomics: The science of arranging and adjusting your work environment to fit you and your body.

When you come across these terms, now hopefully they will have more meaning to you.

TAKE SAFETY HOME!

New Objectives at Amarillo Animal Management & Welfare



Animal Control has a new name and new objectives. The new name – Animal Management & Welfare – reflects the City's objectives to: enhance enforcement of existing laws and codes, enhance existing laws and codes to improve their effectiveness, manage the stray animal population and increasing the live release rate at the shelter. More than just a new name, these changes reflect a new way of conduct – one of inclusion, transparency and of compassion. These principles will continue to shape the City's efforts moving forward.

In its search for a new director, City administrators and the leadership of the City's Animal Control Board have partnered with Strategic Government Resources (SGR), a professional recruitment firm, to develop a selection process that will include the City's partners, community stakeholders and interested parties.

Once in place, the new director, assistant director and animal welfare specialist will form a leadership team accountable to City management and the general public ensuring quality care for pets in our facilities.

"Just One Day" Pet Adoption Event Successful

On June 11, Amarillo Animal Management & Welfare and the Amarillo-Panhandle Humane Society collaborated to participate in Just One Day, an annual, nationwide event in which animal shelters around the country pledge to cease euthanization of healthy, adoptable pets for one day and offer special incentives to further encourage their adoption into loving homes.

Special programs offered at Amarillo Animal Management & Welfare during Just One Day included half-price adoptions of shelter pets and free microchip services to Amarillo residents to help them keep track of their current furry family members. Amarillo Crime Stoppers offered free Kids ID card to parents, with the hope of making children safer and encouraging the addition of pets to their families while they were there. The

Amarillo Police Department also cooked hot dogs for shelter visitors. By offering these attractions, the City hoped to increase community involvement and encourage a maximum number of pet adoptions and life extensions.

A large crowd turned out to take advantage of the Just One Day programs, with lines for microchip services wrapping around the building. Amarillo-Panhandle Humane Society reports that there were 40 adoptions of pets into new and loving families that day.

A warm thank you is in order for all City employees who volunteered their time or contributed services at the event. Not only did your actions help to save the lives of many of our City's abandoned pets, you helped to brighten the lives of many of Amarillo's families.



Above: Sgt. Cody Feagan with the Amarillo Police Department was one of several volunteers who helped make the Just One Day adoption event a huge success!

Below: Animal Welfare & Management officers (in yellow shirts) Amanda Wheeler and Jason Cook help microchip a pet.



Above: Councilmember Ellen Robertson Green is greeted by Hannah Kaspar and Ashley Orr, who volunteered their time from Human Resources to help serve food.

Below left: Mayor Paul Harpole and Interim Director Scott McDonald greet visitors. **Below right:** Animal Control officers Marquita Ricks, Clay Martin and Ethan Hicks.



Promotions/Transfers for June 2014

OLD			NEW	
Name	Title	Department	Title	Department
Misty Brown	Emergency Comm. Specialist-hrly	AECC	Emergency Comm. Specialist	AECC
Jessica High	Emergency Comm. Specialist-hrly	AECC	Emergency Comm. Specialist	AECC
Jennifer Hollingshead	Emergency Comm. Specialist-hrly	AECC	Emergency Comm. Specialist	AECC
Larissa McClellan	Emergency Comm. Specialist-hrly	AECC	Emergency Comm. Specialist	AECC
Michael Mendoza	Emergency Comm. Specialist-hrly	AECC	Emergency Comm. Specialist	AECC
Debra Menefee	Emergency Comm. Specialist-hrly	AECC	Emergency Comm. Specialist	AECC
Tabitha Norvell	Emergency Comm. Specialist-hrly	AECC	Emergency Comm. Specialist	AECC
Brittany Perez	Emergency Comm. Specialist-hrly	AECC	Emergency Comm. Specialist	AECC
Robin Sanders	Emergency Comm. Specialist-hrly	AECC	Emergency Comm. Specialist	AECC
Becky Shaw	Emergency Comm. Specialist-hrly	AECC	Emergency Comm. Specialist	AECC
Kelly Swinney	Emergency Comm. Specialist-hrly	AECC	Emergency Comm. Specialist	AECC
Jose Vasquez	Utility Worker-hrly	Solid Waste Collection	Utility Worker	Street
James Gamblin	Utility Worker	Solid Waste Collection	Commercial Equip. Operator	Solid Waste Collection
Julie Annis	Animal Control Officer-hrly	Animal Mgt. & Welfare	Animal Care Worker	Animal Mgt. & Welfare
Donald Underwood	Utility Worker-hrly	Traffic Field Operations	Utility Worker	Traffic Field Operations
Ruben Vega	Utility Worker-hrly	Traffic Field Operations	Utility Worker	Traffic Field Operations
Charles Walsh	Sanitarian III	Environmental Health	Sanitarian IV	Environmental Health
Ricardo Acosta	Mechanic-hourly	Transit	Mechanic Apprentice	Transit
Dewey Mincey	Street Supervisor 1	Street	Fleet Manager	Fire Civilian Personnel
Chris Benka	Meter Reader-hrly	Utility Billing	Meter Reader	Utility Billing
Nicholas Hernandez	Utility Worker	Water Distribution	Utility Operator	Water Distribution
Tyler Morales	Meter Service Representative	Water Distribution	Odor Control Technician	Wastewater Collection
Damien Alcalá	Utility Worker-hrly	Street	Utility Worker	Drainage Utility
Thomas Allen	Utility Worker-hrly	Street	Utility Worker	Drainage Utility



American Medical Response recently sent a note to Amarillo Parks and Recreation after responding to an injury at one of the City's pools.

"We wanted to personally let you know what an outstanding job the lifeguards and staff did during the event," wrote Zach Dunlap, paramedic and Bethany Martinez, EMT. "Your practice and training most definitely paid off when it had to count."

Thank you AMR for the kind words and congratulations to our lifeguards and staff working hard this summer to keep everyone safe!

Employee Milestones

Name	Title	Department	Years
Steven Grant	Water & Sewer Supervisor II	Waste Water Collection	10
David Martin	Water & Sewer Supervisor I	Water Distribution	20
Jay Arnold	Fire Fighter	Fire Operations	5
Bradley Boman	Fire Driver	Fire Operations	5
John Cruz	Fire Fighter	Fire Operations	5
James Dean Grant	Fire Fighter	Fire Operations	5
Brandon Horn	Fire Fighter	Fire Operations	5
Bradley Junell	Fire Fighter	Fire Operations	5
Daniel Keeler	Fire Fighter	Fire Operations	5
Jeffrey Loyless	Fire Fighter	Fire Operations	5
David Michelotti	Fire Fighter	Fire Operations	5
Jason Segura	Fire Fighter	Fire Operations	5
Jonathan Stevens	Fire Fighter	Fire Operations	5
Gilbert San Miguel	Utility Worker	Solid Waste Collection	10
Victor Taylor	Res. Equip. Operator	Solid Waste Collection	15
David Burgett	Street Supervisor I	Street Department	20
Louis Gilley	Special Projects Manager	Facilities Maintenance	10
John Sena	Building Mechanic III	Facilities Maintenance	5
Alesia Grist	Asst. Dir. of Human Resources	Human Resources	5
Marian Cole	Librarian III	Library	35

Welcome to the COA Team!

Name	Title	Department
Tracie Reilly	Attorney II	Legal
Otto Beyer	Library Messenger	Library
Molly Reddoch	Admin. Asst.-hrly	Library
Chante McVea	Admin. Asst.-hrly	Library
Heidi Brooks	Admin. Asst.-hrly	Library
Justin Hull	Intern	Accounting
Daniel Martin	Utility Worker	Street
Danny Perry	Utility Worker	Solid Waste Collection
Kenneth Dees	Residential Equip. Op.	Solid Waste Collection
Christian Berumen	Utility Worker-hrly	Solid Waste Disposal
Jon Monroe	Utility Worker-hrly	Solid Waste Disposal
Matthew Adams	Police Recruit	Police
Justin Frye	Police Recruit	Police
Rudy Sapien	Police Recruit	Police
Reba Purvis	Police Recruit	Police
Cesar Huerta	Police Recruit	Police
Blake Gray	Police Recruit	Police
Richard Cox	Police Recruit	Police
Billy Corley	Police Recruit	Police
John Chapman	Police Recruit	Police
Jason Carnahan	Police Recruit	Police
Vincent Bissoni	Police Recruit	Police
Ashley Hicks	Admin. Asst. I	Police Civilian Personnel
Michele Stewart	Animal Care Worker	Animal Control
Jackie Crandall	Bus Driver-hrly	Transit
Frank Rapstine	Bus Driver	Transit
Maria Ramos	Bus Driver	Transit
Connor Douglass	Utility Worker-hrly	Ross Rogers Golf Course
Justin DiCarlo	Greenskeeper 1	Ross Rogers Golf Course
Beau Gray	Utility Worker-hrly	Comanche Trail Golf Course
Catherine Westbrook	Asst. Dir. of Parks & Rec.	Parks Administration
Preston Jeffries	Park Technician 1	Park Maintenance
Savannah Oakley	Admissions/Concessions-hrly	Zoo
Kelsy Hinton	Admissions/Concessions-hrly	Zoo
Kassie Adams	Admissions/Concessions-hrly	Zoo
Anthony Helmberger	Traffic Intern	Urban Transportation
Stacy Delgado	Registered Nurse	Public Health
Elaine Roybal	WIC Technician-hrly	WIC
Myrna Fierro	Admin Assistant III	Dir of Utilities
Michael Priest	Utility Worker-hrly	Water Transmission
Ramiro Ontiveros	Utility Worker	Water Distribution
Troy Foster	Utility Worker	Water Distribution
Kelly Grant	Utility Worker	Water Distribution
Margarita Landin	Utility Worker	River Road WWT Plant
Juan Minjarez	Treatment Plant Operator	River Road WWT Plant
Charles Moreno	Utility Worker-hrly	Hollywood Road WWT Plant
Don Savage	Utility Worker-hrly	Hollywood Road WWT Plant
Timothy Priest	Utility Worker-hrly	Hollywood Road WWT Plant
Oscar Martinez	Utility Worker	Drainage Utility
Codie Ivins	Mechanic Apprentice	Municipal Garage
Aaron Gomez	Mechanic Apprentice	Municipal Garage
Olivith Mercado	Teller-hrly	City Federal Credit Union

Congratulations June Retirees!

Shannon Barlow

Animal Control

21 years

Mark McGee

Environmental Lab

32 years

James B. Propst

Amarillo Fire Department

33 years

Zetta Riles

Library

27 years

Faye Stover

Director of Utilities

34 years

Smile of the Month!



Are You Smiling? Share It!

Personal Safety in the Workplace

Tuesday, July 22

9:15 to 11 a.m. or 3:15 to 5 p.m.

or

Thursday, July 24

9:15 to 11 a.m. or 3:15 to 5 p.m.

Downtown Library Meeting Room AB

Call 378-4297 or e-mail

christopher.post@amarillo.gov to sign up

CITY SECRETARY'S OFFICE

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PUBLICATION POLICY:

The *ACE* employee newsletter is distributed by the City Secretary's office monthly through e-mail, print copies and the City's Intranet site. It is designed to help keep you informed of events and accomplishments throughout the organization you serve. If you have ideas for future stories, features or photo opportunities, or to receive this newsletter electronically, contact:

newsletter@amarillo.gov
378-3549

Items must be received no later than the first Friday of each month to make that month's edition.

All items are subject to space availability and edited for appropriateness.

CITY OF AMARILLO

P. O. Box 1971
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City's Quarter Century Club Going Strong

Have you heard about the best club in town? It's exclusive. It's prestigious. And its events, featuring fine dining, snappy entertainment and good conversation, are the place to be!

The City of Amarillo's Quarter Century Club, comprised of more than 500 members who have worked for the City for 25 years or more, is a testament to the level of commitment of City employees, as well as to the City as a positive place to work.

Upon induction, newly-eligible employees receive watches to commemorate the occasion. From that point on, members are invited to attend the annual meetings, where they can enjoy a nice meal and reconnect with members who have retired.

The Quarter Century Club meets every first Monday in June. For more information, contact Human Resources at 378-4294. If you would like to become a member, just keep doing the great job that you're doing!



Col. Perry Gilmore of the Amarillo Police Department and vice president of the Quarter Century Club, along with Deputy City Manager Vicki Covey, present Kelly Nily of the Streets department with a watch to commemorate being inducted into the City's Quarter Century Club.